

GENERAL NOTES

A ROVING BAND OF SAY'S BATS

On the 12th day of July, 1912, my little daughter came to say that there were a lot of strange animals in the roof of our porch. I found they were bats, a whole row of them, thirty-two in number, in a long opening under the eaves, heads out, apparently looking at us. All seemed to be the same size, and yet two, which fell down, could scarcely fly. I had to help them up again to the place. These two were undoubtedly *Myotis subulatus*, the long antitragus being very well marked, and I am satisfied that all the rest were of this species. The one I handled uttered a peculiar "chik, chik, chik," while I held it. All dodged back out of sight when I went too close. On the floor below were a number of pellets. These I gathered up and sent to the Biological Survey for examination. That night the bats were very busy around the porch. Next morning all were gone and have never been there since. I have not the slightest reason to suppose that they ever were there before. I do not know of any bat colony in the neighborhood. It seems to me that this incident points to a hitherto unsuspected habit of roaming in bands during the summertime.

The pellets according to report of the Biological Survey "contained the remains of numerous Diptera, several spiders, a scarabæoid beetle and one cuckoo-fly (Hymenoptera) *Chrysis* sp."—ERNEST THOMPSON SETON, *Greenwich, Conn.*

THE BROWN BAT ACTIVE IN WINTER AT WASHINGTON, D. C.

One of our more severe winter days in Washington, D. C., was February 5, 1917. The temperature at noon was 10°F., the atmosphere clear, but the wind high, blustering, and penetrating. At 1:25 p.m. I noticed a brown bat (*Eptesicus fuscus fuscus*) flying past a window at the west end of the new National Museum. It alighted on a narrow ledge in a cornice, 9 feet above ground, on the north wall of the extreme west wing (freight entrance) of the museum. Here it was exposed to the full blast of the cold wind from which it was apparently suffering intensely. It would remain still a moment, hunched up with the wing membrane protecting its side. Then it would run along the ledge 2 or 3 feet and rest again. These actions continued for about 8 minutes, when it flew to the ground and alighted on a cement sidewalk about 20 feet from its former resting place on the wall. A few minutes later I rescued it from the pavement. It was now in a semi-dormant condition, showed none of its bat-like pugnacity, and evidently would have died soon from exposure. I brought it into the museum where the warmth almost instantly revived it. Released, it flew about the office for about 5 minutes, frequently testing the wall for a favorable place to alight. It finally settled at the edge of the ceiling where it hung by its pollical claw from a crack between the ceiling and wall.

While the bat was flying about the room, its form, outlined against the white walls, tempted me to count the wing beats. I was surprised that, in several counts, they averaged 280 per minute.—HARTLEY H. T. JACKSON, *U. S. Biological Survey, Washington, D. C.*

THE GRIZZLY BEAR AS A TREE-CLIMBER

We are all, of course, familiar with the ever recurring statement that the full grown grizzly does not climb, and William T. Hornaday in his *American Natural History* claims that this species, in contrast to the agile black bear, cannot climb trees.

At the present time there is confined in the Philadelphia Zoological Gardens, a fully matured grizzly (*Ursus horribilis*) which, whenever occasion arises, both climbs and descends the tree in the center of his den with far greater speed and ease than any black bear ever exhibited, and I have personally observed other grizzlies confined in the same dens demonstrate similar climbing ability.

Is it not, therefore, reasonable to suppose that grizzlies have the ability to climb, but that their habits of life are such that, under normal conditions, climbing would never be a useful trait to develop?—ARTHUR H. FISHER, *Washington, D. C.*

WOLVERENE IN ITASCA COUNTY, MINNESOTA

In a recent paper on the mammals of Itasca County, Minnesota, there appears no record of the wolverene (*Gulo luscus*) for the region. (Cahn, A. R., *Journ. Mamm.*, vol. 2, pp. 68-74, May, 1921.) Through the kindness of Dr. H. V. Ogden, of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, there has been for several years an almost perfect skull of an adult male wolverene from Minnesota in the possession of the Biological Survey. The animal was killed in section 7, T 61 N, R 25 W, Itasca County, January 11, 1899. The specimen is number 110,281, United States National Museum, Biological Survey Collection.—HARTLEY H. T. JACKSON, *U. S. Biological Survey, Washington, D. C.*

MORE ACROBATIC SKUNKS

During 1912 I published in *Country Life* an account of my skunk farm. A paragraph was devoted to the skunk "Johnny Jumpup" who had the curious trick of standing on his front feet with hind feet up in the air. Commenting on this in a letter, Mr. J. S. Duss, Jr., of New Smyrna, Florida, wrote to me at the time that "civet cats" were quite numerous around his house on the peninsula opposite the town. They were very tame and it was almost the rule for them to do the "very stunt which Johnny does." He had seen "several at one time about the back porch doing the act."—ERNEST THOMPSON SETON, *Greenwich, Conn.*

RED SQUIRRELS SWIMMING A LAKE

On September 18, 1921, I visited White Sand Lake, Vilas County, Wisconsin, on a fishing trip. While my companion and I were arranging for a boat he noticed a small animal swimming some distance out from the shore and asked what it was. I ventured the opinion it might be a muskrat, but the boatman said no, it was a red squirrel, and that they had been crossing the lake to this (the south) shore from a point on the north shore for some days past. Sometimes as many as four or five were seen to cross in one day, according to his statement. I was somewhat incredulous as I had never seen a squirrel take voluntarily to the water. His assertion in this case was soon verified, however, for the little animal came almost directly toward us and landed scarcely twenty feet from where we were standing. It didn't hesitate a moment as it reached the land but quickly crossed

the narrow beach and plunged into the underbrush. Its landing apparently excited the interest or curiosity of another squirrel, which came chattering down a nearby tree. It would have been easy to interpret the incident as the cordial greeting of a relative who had made the passage earlier and was anxiously awaiting the arrival of the recent immigrant.

The point from which the squirrel came is a long, heavily wooded promontory extending from the north shore, and separated from the south shore by perhaps an eighth of a mile of open water. At other places the lake is the better part of a mile in width. No reason for the migration—for the transit of the lake seemed to be in one direction only—was evident, though the boatman suggested that "something must be after 'em over there." Perhaps a more plausible explanation is that there was a scarcity of food on the point (or a superabundance of squirrels, which would amount to the same thing) which was driving them to seek new territory and the heavy forests of the south shore were more attractive than the somewhat more scanty growth to the northward.

The individual we saw swam calmly and evenly with head well up, shoulders nearly submerged, but rump and tail high. It gave the appearance of swimming without exertion, and did not seem at all fatigued when it reached the land. It may be a common habit for squirrels to cross bodies of water in this way, as it is with many other land mammals, but if so, it has escaped my notice.

Since writing the above note I have learned from a colleague, Prof. William H. Wright, that on August 15, 1921, he caught a "pickerel" (great northern pike, *Lucius lucius*) 37 inches in length and weighing a little over 11 pounds, which contained in its stomach a full grown red squirrel. The squirrel was intact, having apparently been devoured quite recently. The fish was caught in Lake Fanny Hoe, Keweenaw County, Michigan, at about 7 p.m. This is a deep lake some two miles long and one-fourth to one-half mile wide, and is completely surrounded by forests. The residents of the region expressed no surprise as they said the squirrels frequently swim the lake.—LEON J. COLE, *Madison, Wis.*

GRAY SQUIRREL IN THE ADIRONDACKS

In 1887 I was shooting on the south branch of the Beaver River in the Adirondacks. At that time red squirrels were very numerous, but one day, on the edge of a burning among some bushes, I saw a gray squirrel which I shot. It was an adult male and besides being castrated had only the stump of a tail and showed many scars, the result I suppose of attacks by red squirrels. As this was the only gray squirrel I ever saw in that part of the country, and I was there in 1887, 1888, 1889, and 1890, I write to ask if there are other records of them. My guides had never seen others there.—GEORGE L. HARRISON, *Poplar House, St. Davids', Pennsylvania.*

EARLY RECORDS OF BUFFALO IN "CALIFORNIA" [= NEVADA, UTAH AND SOUTHWESTERN WYOMING]

Several early writers mention the buffalo as a native of California. Thus Lansford W. Hastings, in an account of an overland trip to Oregon and California in 1842, enumerates the game found in what was then the western part of California—the California of today—and states that the game in the *eastern section*—now Nevada, Utah, and western Wyoming—was with very few exceptions

practically the same. He goes on to say: "In addition, however, to the game found in that [*western*] section, the white bear [= grizzly], the mountain sheep and the buffalo, are also found, in this [*eastern*] section. The latter of which, are here found in much greater numbers, than in any other portion of the country, west of the Rocky Mountains. In many portions of the country, the plains and hills are literally covered with them. Several tribes of the Indians here, as in Oregon, subsist almost entirely upon the beef of the buffalo, which they are enabled to obtain, in any desired quantities."¹

This reference to buffalo and grizzly bears in California requires explanation. At the period in question (1843) California was a Mexican province extending easterly from the Pacific Coast to the Rocky Mountains. Hastings states specifically that Green River "is to California what the Columbia is to Oregon, the Mississippi to the United States" and so on (p. 72). He states also: "The Colorado and its tributaries water much of the northern portion; most of the southern, and all the eastern portion of Upper California" (p. 75); and furthermore that Great Salt Lake is "situated entirely in California" (p. 76). This accounts for the mention of buffalo in connection with grizzly bears and mountain sheep in California.

Chittenden's Map of the "Trans-Mississippi Territory"² during the period of the Fur Trade from 1807 to 1843 places the northeastern boundary of the Mexican Possessions far enough east to include not only the Green River country but also the Medicine Bow Mountains of Wyoming.—C. HART MERRIAM, *Washington, D. C.*

¹ Lansford W. Hastings, *The Emigrants' Guide to Oregon and California*, p. 99, 1845.

² Hiram Martin Chittenden, *The American Fur Trade of the Far West*, Vol. 3, 1902.